

people there in their time of grief. I will also bring a message that in this time of difficulty and in the battle against terror and the struggle for peace, Israel is not alone.

Before I leave I would also like to say something to the Congress. We face here urgent domestic issues that demand our attention and our action. This Friday the Government will shut down for a third time if Congress does not pass a funding bill. Today I signed a temporary measure to ensure the creditworthiness of the United States until approximately the end of the month. But to preserve the full faith and credit of America, Congress must pass a long-term, straightforward debt extension.

Other significant legislation also awaits action. We should pass a balanced budget plan that reflects our values and supports our economic growth. The Congress and I have identified in common over \$700 billion in savings, more than enough to balance the budget in 7 years and to protect Medicare and Medicaid and our investments in education and the environment, and to provide modest but important tax relief.

We should also pass a bipartisan welfare reform bill that genuinely moves people from welfare to work and strengthens families. And we

should pass the Kennedy-Kassebaum health care bill so that working people do not lose their health insurance when they change jobs or when someone in the family gets sick.

Agreement on all these bills is clearly within reach. Our Nation must move forward. We cannot wait until after November to do the people's business. We have an obligation to keep the Government open and funded, and we have a distinct opportunity, if we act now, to pass the right kind of balanced budget, welfare reform, and health insurance reform.

I say again to Congress what I said in the State of the Union Address and what I have said repeatedly since: My door is open. I am ready to meet with the leaders of the Congress at any time to move forward on any or all of these matters of national urgency. It is time to put partisan politics aside and work together in the national interest. Spring is coming, and we ought to give the American people a rebirth of bipartisan, productive accomplishment in this new spring.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:46 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With King Hussein of Jordan Aboard Air Force One March 12, 1996

President's Health

Q. How's your cold?

The President. It's okay. Like I said, Hillary had a cough and then Chelsea was sick and I sort of got it. It'll be gone in a day or two. It's just a head cold, it's not any big deal—just from the neck up.

Q. Does it bother your ears?

The President. No.

Air Force One

Q. You know—[inaudible]—is a certified pilot of this aircraft.

The President. Right. Well, he was up there on takeoff. I don't know if he lifted us off or not.

King Hussein. I watched and was very impressed by the wonderful, professional team up there.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. What are you guys going to talk about?

The President. A lot of—[inaudible].

Q. Any surprises coming out of this summit, Mr. President? What do you expect?

The President. I don't know. I think a very strong statement will come out of it and that we may have some pretty good ideas come out of it for what we can all do together. I hope so. But I thank His Majesty for standing up for the right thing in the Middle East and helping to get so many other countries involved in this. He's got quite a remarkable array of people actually coming together on short notice.

Q. What would make the meeting a success?

The President. Well, I think a strong united stand for keeping the peace process going and standing against the terror as a precondition of that, because unless people are secure they can't go forward. I think that's the most important thing. And then, obviously, we want to come out with some more concrete steps. We've taken some already; we intend to take some more.

Q. Anything on Iran?

The President. Well, wait a minute, we've got to have the meeting. We haven't had the meeting yet.

Q. What about Syria? What about the lack of Syrians present?

The President. Well, I wish they were there, the Syrians. I wish they were there. But I be-

lieve that in terms of continuing the peace process and keeping commitments, that President Asad will do that. And that's very important, very important.

I hope you all get some sleep.

Q. You, too.

The President. It's 10 minutes after 10 Egyptian time—[laughter]—so watch a movie and go to bed. It's real important. You're going to have a hard day tomorrow.

NOTE: The exchange began at 10 p.m. In his remarks, the President referred to President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks at the Opening of the Summit of the Peacemakers in Sharm al-Sheikh, Egypt

March 13, 1996

Thank you very much. President Mubarak, Your Majesties, Your Highnesses, heads of state, heads of government, Foreign Ministers, and Mr. Secretary-General.

I'd like to begin by thanking President Mubarak for his extraordinary efforts in the last few days to convene this meeting, to host us here, and to make us feel welcome. I thank President Yeltsin, my distinguished cosponsor of the peace process, and all the rest of you who have come so far on such short notice to this very important meeting.

From all around the world we have come to the Sinai to deliver one simple, unified message: Peace will prevail. This summit is unprecedented in the history of the Middle East. It would have been inconceivable just a few short years ago. It stands as proof and promise that this region has changed for good. Leaders from Israel and the Arab world, from Europe, from Asia, from North America, 29 of us, shoulder-to-shoulder, joined in support of peace. We have gathered before to celebrate new milestones in our journey; today we join in common defense against those who would turn us back. We are here because we know what is at stake.

In the 18 years since Egypt and Israel made a miracle at Camp David, Israelis and Arabs

have changed the course of history in their lands. Step by step, courageously they have broken with the past, laying down the arms of war and opening their arms to one another. But with every milestone passed along the road of peace and progress, the enemies of peace have grown more desperate and more depraved. They know they cannot compete in the marketplace of ideas; they know they have nothing to offer but hardship and despair. And so they resort to murderous attacks that are an affront to the civilized world and to the moral precepts that lie at the core of the three faiths represented here, as President Mubarak has so eloquently stated.

In the busy streets of Jerusalem, Ashkelon, and Tel Aviv, suicide bombers launched a wave of terror to kill as many Israelis as possible: ordinary men and women riding the bus to work, families shopping for the holidays, innocent children in their Purim costumes, murdered for the blood in their veins. Our hearts go out to the people of Israel and to all the victims of these atrocities, which include also Palestinians and Americans. Many of the nations here today have experienced the nightmare of terror. Death does not discriminate among the terrorists' victims. Over the last 2 weeks, as I